

Murtha
Norwood
Oxley
Pearce
Pombo

Rohrabacher
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Shays
Spratt

Strickland
Terry
Thompson (MS)
Udall (CO)
Wynn

□ 1913

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 37598 Goodhue Avenue in Dennison, Minnesota, as the 'Albert H. Quie Post Office'."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed two votes on November 1st, 2005. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on both H.R. 3548 (the Heinz Ahlmeyer Jr. Post Office Building Designation Act) and H.R. 3989 (the Albert Harold Quie Post Office Designation Act).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, on November 1, 2005 I missed recorded votes and would like my intentions included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both H.R. 3548 and H.R. 3989.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber today. I would like the RECORD to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes No. 557 and No. 558.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was attending events in my congressional district during today's rollcall votes on H.R. 3548, the Heinz Ahlmeyer, Jr., Post Office Building Designation Act, and H.R. 3989, the Albert Harold Quie Post Office Designation Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of both bills.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 2216

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered as the first sponsor of H.R. 2216, a bill originally introduced by Representative COX of California, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE of Oklahoma). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

AVIAN FLU

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the President has finally discovered that there is a threat of an avian bird flu pandemic despite the fact that it was discovered about 8 years ago. Experts have been talking about the threat of the pandemic for a number of years. Last year the President in his budget spent \$182 million on chastity education and \$100 million on preparation for a pandemic. That is for all investment in flus, vaccines, and antivirals and research.

I am glad that he has had a change of heart now. Now he is going to begin to adequately fund the threat, but it is getting pretty late. The U.S. does not make the vaccines. In fact, there is not a very good vaccine available. And we do not make the antivirals. And we are going to have to get in line behind every other country in the world that had better foresight than this administration.

ACROSS-THE-BOARD SPENDING CUTS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the other day the President spoke out in support of across-the-board spending cuts as an option for reducing Federal spending. I want to applaud the President for joining us on this issue. On October 20, I wrote a letter of thanks to the President, thanking him for supporting across-the-board spending reductions.

In September, along with two of my colleagues, I introduced H.R. 3903, H.R. 3904, and H.R. 3906, 1, 2, and 5 percent across-the-board reduction bills for nondefense, non-Homeland Security discretionary spending. We have 18 members signed as co-sponsors, and I hope to continue building support for the reductions. Every Member in this body should be able to support at least a 1 percent reduction.

This House leadership has actively pushed to rein in spending, and I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting these bills.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 20, 2005.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you for promising to work with Congress to offset costs for Gulf Coast reconstruction with spending cuts. I know that you and I are committed to act in a fiscally responsible way in paying for the reconstruction efforts.

In your speech on October 4th from the Rose Garden, you stated that you want Congress to pay for as much of the hurricane relief as possible by cutting spending and that you will work with Congress to identify offsets to free up money for the reconstruction efforts. You also called on Congress to make real cuts in non-security spending.

Mr. President, I have introduced three bills that are significant first steps towards meeting your goals. The bills would enact across-the-board 1%, 2%, and 5% reductions in non-defense and non-homeland security discretionary spending. I believe that by working together on these proposals we can show the American people that you and I are dedicated to exercising spending restraint to prevent more federal debt passing on to future generations.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to working with you during the coming months.

Sincerely,

MARSHA BLACKBURN,
Member of Congress.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE of Oklahoma). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the Special Order time of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

TRADE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a subcommittee of the Japanese Food Safety Commission, on Prions, which deals primarily with BSE, or mad cow disease, voted to pursue a course designed to open Japan's borders to U.S. beef. This is something that the beef industry has been waiting for for about 1 year, 1½ years now. And the full committee will vote tomorrow on opening trade with the United States, and then this will begin a 4-week comment period, after which it is assumed that borders will open. So we are hoping that by the end of the year we will see U.S. beef going to Japan.

This is certainly important for our beef industry because Japan was buying at one time roughly \$1.7 billion of U.S. beef annually. So it is a huge portion of our beef trade.

Getting the border open has been surprisingly difficult, however. We had two cases of BSE in North America that shut off trade with Japan. Japan

has had numerous cases of BSE in recent years. Our current testing system would detect one BSE-positive cow out of 10 million healthy cows with a 99 percent probability. So the odds of a BSE cow getting through our present system is practically nil. So it is a very reliable system.

Contrast this with the scenario currently going on with the European Union. In 2004, last year, there were 756 cases of BSE in the European Union, 756, whereas in all of North America there have been no more than four or five cases in the last 3 years. There have been 189,102 cases of BSE in Europe since BSE was first found several years ago. So it has been a huge amount of trouble that they have had. Yet the United States has experienced practically no exports of our beef to Europe. One would think with that scenario that we would have had a tremendous export opportunity.

The European Union has blocked U.S. beef in violation of WTO rules, also has blocked our pork, our poultry, and genetically modified crops. So the European Union, certainly, has not been a good trading partner; and they have, as I mentioned, violated WTO rules in doing so.

The net agriculture trade deficit between the United States and the European Union was a minus \$5 billion last year; so we have taken a big hit in this area.

Current trade talks with the European Union are very important, and we have an excellent trade ambassador, Rob Portman, who is doing a great job and we have great confidence in him, but currently we have an offer on the table which is one by which we would reduce our amber box, our farm subsidies, by 60 percent, from \$19 billion to roughly \$7.5 billion.

We have asked the European Union to reduce their trade subsidies by 83 percent, from \$80 billion down to \$15 billion. The EU has countered with an offer to reduce their export subsidies and also their farm subsidies to 39 percent, which is certainly not a very satisfactory counteroffer. As a result, we are somewhat concerned about their response to this whole situation.

It seems that tariffs certainly need to be equalized between the U.S. and the European Union. Currently, our tariffs on goods going into the European Union are roughly 30 percent. Their goods coming into the United States are roughly 12 percent. So here these two large trading partners, with economies of somewhere in the \$9 trillion to \$11 trillion range, still have a great dichotomy in terms of the actual tariffs that are being charged against the U.S. versus the EU.

The important thing to realize is if these trade agreements are formalized and if they do come into being, this will certainly change the nature and structure of our current farm bill.

A note of caution here, Mr. Speaker. Brazil is waiting there and seeing what is going to happen. Their land is rough-

ly 10 percent of our land value. Their labor costs are about 5 percent of our value. So if we reduce our farm programs, they are going to be a formidable competitor. We certainly think our farmers can compete with anyone in the world; but when the playing field is that unequal, it can be a problem. So it is really important that we realize that trade agreements are tremendous if they are honored and if the playing field is equal, but they can be huge liabilities if one side honors the agreements and the other does not.

So far with the European Union that has been pretty much the situation. So in Congress we need to look at the next WTO round very carefully.

THE CONTINUING WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, every time you look, the rationale for the Iraq war has shifted. It went from being about weapons of mass destruction to removing Saddam Hussein to trying to build a democratic Iraq.

We were told this war would be over in a matter of weeks, and that the Iraqis would be able to finance it with oil sales. We were promised it was not a mission of nation building.

But the reality is we're two years in and we've spent more than \$200 billion dollars on this venture. And who is paying for all of this? The American taxpayer.

The outstanding public debt as of October 3 is almost \$8,000,000,000,000 (eight trillion). With a population approaching 300 million, each U.S. citizen's share of this debt is about \$27,000.

Big government conservatives are spending trillions and wasting billions. Republicans are no longer the party of fiscal conservancy, but the party of runaway spending and corruption.

The majority's oversight of the spending in Iraq has been simply disgraceful. The time for accountability is long overdue. It is time to stop handing the president blank checks.

Each week in Iraq, the deadly attacks continue, and more of our troops are lost. Our death toll now is past 2,000 Americans.

These attacks remind us again of the urgent need to develop a more effective strategy in Iraq—one I and my colleagues on this side of the aisle suggested before we went to war, and one that was disregarded.

The reality in Iraq is that we are creating new terrorists and severely damaging the public impression of the United States in the Muslim world.

We should not be advocating an immediate withdrawal. But we need an exit strategy addressing our goals in Iraq and proposing the announcement of a timetable to draw down the majority of U.S. forces during 2006.

Yet the president still refuses to level with Congress and the American people about when such withdrawals may actually come to pass.

Our military leaders have repeatedly told us that there is no purely military solution in Iraq, and that a political settlement is a necessary element for success.

Meanwhile, the Administration continues urging the American people to "stay the

course." That's a bumper sticker slogan, not a strategy.

The dishonesty needs to stop. The American people deserve better.

Our troops have done everything we've asked of them in Iraq. They have acted heroically. They have done their job.

We must have a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces—or at the very least a plan for it—something the administration has incredibly failed to do for over two years.

This means conveying that our troops will not be there forever. It means the Iraqis must come together. Only Iraqi unity can stop the insurgency, not a permanent U.S. military presence.

The administration has been sending the wrong message with repeated statements that we will stay in Iraq as long as we are needed.

We should not mislead the Iraqis into thinking they have unlimited time to reach a settlement. The longer they think that, the less likely they will be to act.

The administration needs to speak honestly with the American people. Exaggerating our progress in defeating the insurgency or in creating an Iraqi army paints a dangerous picture. Repeated tours in Iraq and Afghanistan have strained our forces and have hurt recruitment.

The American people are losing patience with the mounting casualties and costs.

Democrats are asking the administration to do its job and to develop a strategy for successful completion of the mission.

It's past time for a plan to ensure that our mission in Iraq is a success and that our brave men and women in uniform can begin to come home soon.

We must support initiatives that provide clear, concrete measures and milestones that our troops need for defeating the insurgency, building up Iraqi security forces, and handing over Iraq to the Iraqi people.

From increased gas prices to corruption in Ohio and Washington; from record spending and record debt to jobs shipped overseas; and from failing to supply body armor to our troops in Iraq to skyrocketing healthcare costs, the Republican agenda has proved a failure.

And they've done nothing to remedy it.

The Republicans are running wild with our tax dollars and it's been a mistake to let this administration continue a policy of incompetence when it comes to Iraq.

It is past time for Republican leadership to answer for record deficits and reckless spending, both in Iraq and in the U.S. It's time for a plan to bring our troops home.

It's a message the American people understand, but Republicans aren't willing to accept.

IRAQ AND AMERICA'S LEADERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last year when it became clear that the United States was unprepared to fight an increasingly hostile and aggressive Iraqi insurgency, Secretary Rumsfeld told our troops: "You have to go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you want."

Well, I am here tonight to tell Secretary Rumsfeld and the other members of the Bush administration that